



# AUBADE

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# AUBADE 1998



*Volume XXVIII*

**poetry and prose**

32nd Street, Newport News.....	4
<i>David Lowell</i>	
Couldn't have said it better.....	6
<i>Andrew Mefferd</i>	
love hymn.....	7
<i>Meg Weireter</i>	
just a flower poem really.....	9
<i>Sarah McCall</i>	
Painting Pennsylvania.....	10
<i>Andrew Mefferd</i>	
Us.....	14
<i>Meg Weireter</i>	
Mocking Portrait.....	16
<i>Chandra DasGupta</i>	
Driving Since 7:00 a.m.....	18
<i>Alison Titus</i>	
This in a Hot Spell.....	20
<i>Sarah McCall</i>	
Dickinson's Cigarettes.....	21
<i>Chandra DasGupta</i>	
Maps.....	22
<i>Lindsay Stover</i>	
Rarest of Blankets.....	24
<i>Dow Stick</i>	
Untitled.....	26
<i>Chandra DasGupta</i>	
over geological discussions.....	27
<i>Natasha Ward</i>	
heat seek.....	28
<i>Andrew Mefferd</i>	
alchemy.....	29
<i>Alison Titus</i>	
Holiday Dinner at Diner.....	30
<i>Benjamin Bishop</i>	
[in other words, samsara].....	31
<i>Alison Titus</i>	
Classic Navy Heels.....	33
<i>Lauren Q. Chadwick</i>	
Comet.....	34
<i>Lindsay Stover</i>	

Filler.....	35
<i>Samuel S. Rio</i>	
Kevin Hugh Didn't Know What To Do.....	38
<i>Katy Sullivan</i>	
Ducks.....	40
<i>Meg Weireter</i>	
Ceruleans & Midnights.....	41
<i>Alison Titus</i>	
Untitled.....	43
<i>Sarah McCall</i>	

## **art**

Portrait II.....	5
<i>Zach Holtzman</i>	
In the Forest of Phalli.....	8
<i>Allison Brown</i>	
Portrait I.....	11
<i>Zach Holtzman</i>	
Extended Family.....	13
<i>Kirsten St. Clair</i>	
Self-Portrait.....	15
<i>Kacey Kology</i>	
Calypso.....	17
<i>Caroline Danforth</i>	
Germany.....	21
<i>Caroline Danforth</i>	
Grand Prize.....	23
<i>Lindsey Flaherty</i>	
Self-Portrait V.....	25
<i>Zach Holtzman</i>	
One Kiss.....	26
<i>Allison Brown</i>	
Intrayoni.....	28
<i>Julie Crowder</i>	
Vase #3.....	32
<i>S.Z. Tucker</i>	
Baby Ashley.....	34
<i>Christina Charba</i>	
Untitled.....	37
<i>Lindsey Flaherty</i>	
Aargh!.....	39
<i>Kirsten St. Clair</i>	
Untitled.....	42
<i>Lindsey Flaherty</i>	

# 32nd Street, Newport News

The cold gutters of 32nd Street  
don't stop at the curb  
with the sailors  
and the girls at MaryLee's;  
they wrap themselves around  
cautious lives, broken glass,  
and plywood windows,  
reaching in to bedrooms and living rooms  
where knuckles collide  
with brittle resolve, and the screaming  
blackens into one long wail: crashing  
back and forth, against the walls  
exploding the windows  
and lunging at night- .  
where it falls like loud snow  
back into the street.

*David Lowell*



Zach Holtzman

*Portrait II*

*Ink*

# Couldn't have said it better

we spoke to each other  
In thinly veiled/magnetic/poetry  
until we got better/acquainted  
and just said things  
like how you were/vulnerable  
to being let down/by just about/anything  
I had no idea  
that I would be/anything

and he said-  
it's not very sturdy,  
but I built it myself  
(I couldn't have said it better myself)

we should all be  
loudly afraid/when we are  
is what you said  
when you were  
vulnerable/to being let down  
by everything  
and I'm glad/that you did-  
otherwise/the horse  
you fell off of  
would've been  
much higher/than it/already was

It was good while it lasted,  
but I think that noise was  
everything breaking

*by Andrew Mefferd*

## love hymn.

gloria  
to the tinkling wet wine  
which we drink alone  
whilst  
your fingers swim my cheek  
and to a hush  
of mufflecotton  
like bread rising  
(hush)  
and i  
hum and you  
smileflutter my eyes  
(hush)  
and to our whispers

*by Meg Weireter*



Allison Brown

*In the Forest of Phalli*

Black and White photography

## Just a flower poem really

green thought  
imagination train  
I'm screaming my way out  
of my skin  
and tears make me choke  
in this house  
on the phone  
in the street  
walking quick  
ready like tulips drooping  
they get ready and in their  
redness  
look away one second  
look back  
they're down  
I'm down like that  
next season comes  
we get up again  
gather up roots and dirt  
and roots and pebbles and  
lint and trash  
and damn remembrances  
looking glass cobalt blue  
distortion through a  
looking glass  
  
in this preparation for peace  
of mind  
I've foiled again

*by Sarah McCall*

# Painting Pennsylvania

by Andrew Mefferd

It felt a lot like Pennsylvania as I rolled down the window. I had the idea that the rush of air by my right ear would be comforting, and it would air out the car to boot. I had been in a weird mood all evening since leaving home and driving back to school. The recently passed winter break had been the first time it felt normal, even good, to be at home again. Home places, home people, home things, had gained allure again.

I think maybe it was saying bye to my mom that messed me up for awhile. I used to get annoyed and couldn't leave the house fast enough. Now, "bye" came out like an apology.

The car had always struck me as vaguely cow-size. Driving through the nameless pasture lands made me feel I was riding inside one of those "medical miracle" cows with the portholes in the sides, so you can watch them digest. The only thing lacking in this illusion were the black spots, which could have been applied easily enough to the outside of the car. Not be such a bad idea, but I'd feel like an idiot most of the time in a cow car.

The way the land was flat and black except for small blurry points of light off the side of the road reminded of the drive back from Pennsylvania. Many mornings as a child I was trundled into the back seat of the car with my brother and taken to see the grandparents. They would ask me how soccer, or football, or baseball, or whatever activity it was that I was doing at the time was, and then go back to picking at each other.

The mood of those morning drives up to Pennsylvania asserted themselves less completely over the passengers then the drive back down that evening. In the morning, everyone could read their own thing or look out the window. Night was too dark to read in, and I would be sleepy but unable to not look out at the unfamiliar landscape given endless possibility by the darkness. Lions, tigers, bears, deer. My brother would be asleep and drooling against the window at such a time, providing a kind of soundtrack with his snoring.

Back in the here and now, everything was becoming two dimensional about twenty feet ahead of the car, giving me the impression that I was being

driven into a painting. I am not sure if we were painting as we were going or being painted in, but it made me feel good to be a work in progress.

I'm not sure how or why, but talking about my weird mood made Frances, who was driving, start talking about her weird moods, fighting and crying with her parents. When she mentioned her parents crying, I could only think about my own parents crying.

"I didn't used to know that parents cried," I told her. One morning when I was a kid I went into the basement and my mom was comforting my dad while he cried. I had never seen this before, and was so surprised that, instead of asking what's wrong, I said I didn't know parents cried. As if somehow, after having had children, the tear ducts shrivel up and the inclination to cry goes to someone else.

My parents told me that even parents get that sad sometimes. My dad's dad had a heart attack. The way I heard "heart attack" sounded like "hard attack" to my adolescent mind; I had no idea what this was, but it was obviously bad.



Zach Holtzman    Portrait I    Ink and Graphite

I don't recall being very upset at my grandfather's heart attack, but more being surprised at my dad's being upset. My grandfather did not die that day, but things changed anyway. I am glad he didn't- otherwise I would feel obliged to feel bad about that day.

"Have you seen your mom cry?" Frances asked.

"Yes," I said, imagining what landscape existed under the cover of darkness.

"What did your mom cry about?"

"I dunno. Sad stuff. I think I've seen her cry more times. And besides, it's kindof expected for your mom to cry. Not that it's any different- it just didn't stick the same way. It's weird that I saw my dad cry first, though. Or maybe I just remember it that way."

"We've got to turn around- we're running out of gas."

"Oh, shit, you're right." The needle was resting on the pin in the red area. So she made U-turn.

"Don't worry- I can go thousands of miles on this," she said. "I've tested it." I was sure she had.

I rolled the window up and stared out of it, distracted out of my weird mood. Sometimes physical distance can translate into emotional distance. Some big illuminated thing floated on the right. It looked like what I imagine a football stadium would in the middle of a cornfield. "Do you know what that thing is?"

"No, I don't," she said.

"Let's come out here in the daytime sometime."

"Alright," she said, steering us into the night.

After I had woken up and taken a shower the next morning, I walked outside expecting to immediately feel my hair start freezing in the harsh cold of the night before. It was the nicest weather we had had in a long time, and it was nice to be able to look at things without my temperature dropping. There were even balls of gnats dogfighting around my head, and I raised my hand as I went back inside so as not to draw them in with me. ■



Kirsten St. Clair

Extended Family

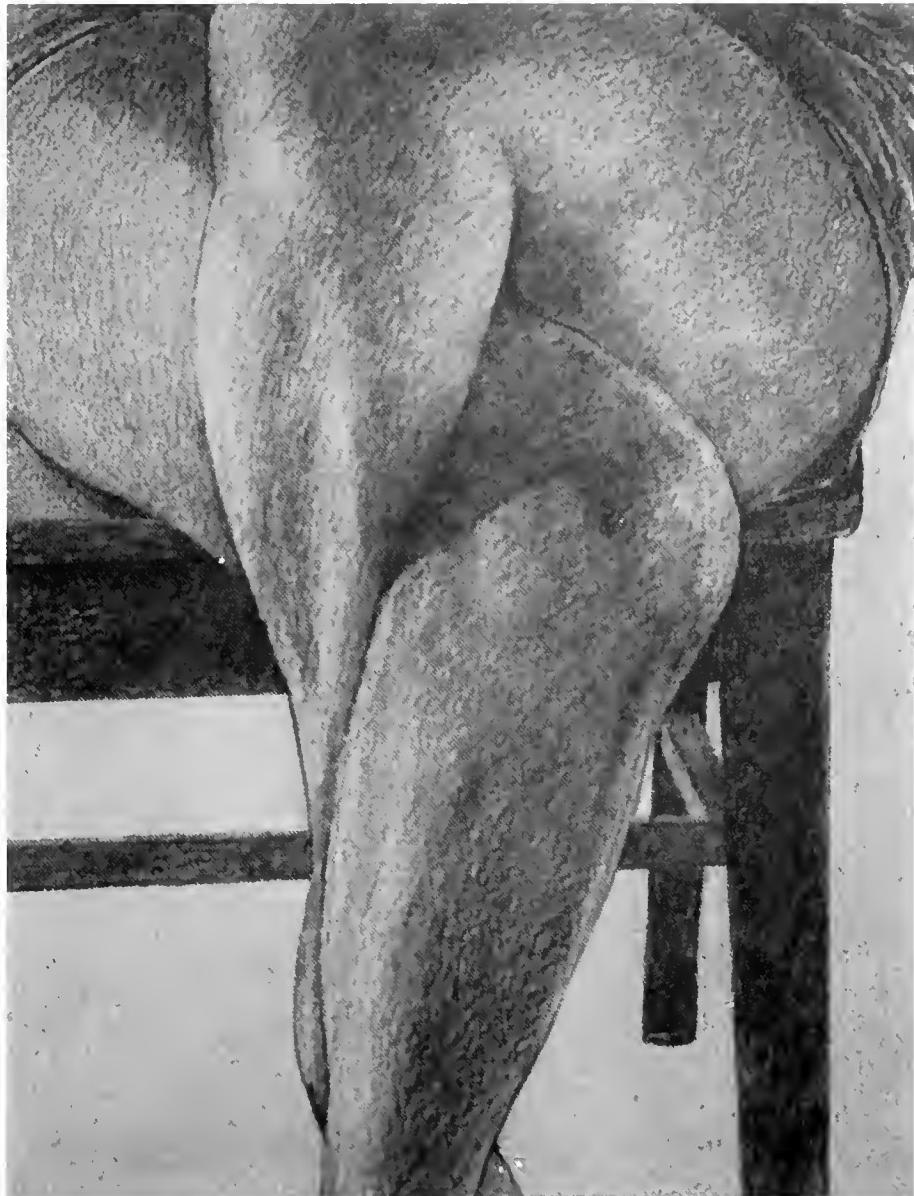
Pencil Drawing

# Us

like a hot heavy cloud she was on me  
lips rounded in plump stickiness  
and we danced close  
shared winks across classrooms, shared lipsticks,  
shared cigarettes in steamy bus stops as the sky  
drooled around us.  
papers folded tight and small and nearly square  
spoke sex from even college-ruled lines,  
and a wet lipstick stain stamped the bottom of each page.  
we wrapped ourselves in hot black coats and  
went sledding in the dense snow of that winter,  
and said "love is fun!" laughing,  
me folded into her hot lap, tight like our notes.

sometimes in cold rain i bum a cigarette  
but decline the light, to play with it,  
feeling its roundness roll up and down my fingers  
in sensuous dance,  
wondering, "can love be fun?"  
she was my door,  
the one firemen say is too hot to the touch to be opened,  
for there's fire lurking just on the other side.  
i opened it anyway  
and  
the burns left behind  
have melted like hot lipstick into my skin.

*by Meg Weireter*



*Kacey Kology*

*Self Portrait*

*Pencil Drawing*

## *Mocking Portrait*

This is not what I ask for  
your assimilated bargains,  
The stress of one palm against  
a naked back  
(or was it against creased silk  
I learned to hate this)  
This was not what I was looking for-  
Intelligence fades faster  
than beauty in this light.  
You lean back against the bed frame,  
a pen to your pursed lips.  
Divine details-  
Your eyes somewhere between  
a polluted ocean  
and gray of city snow.  
Your mouth-  
a pose of cleverness and cruelty,  
mocking and full.

This story I've heard before-  
You seduced time.  
The lines drawn on your face  
come from the justifications  
in the mirror every morning.

The thing I hate the most  
(keep this quiet, I know you will  
because when we're alone your  
theatrics are turned off then  
you're closest to real)  
You really are clever-  
You are the mess only  
brilliance could make.

You select your audiences  
with sly precision.  
You twist stories into  
memory into granite into  
falsity and back again.

Alone.  
We sit 'in silence,  
you are a performer,  
again the details-  
Your hands make a steeple,  
the sheets of unlined paper  
wave in the breeze of a fan.  
This is not what I asked for-  
A stress of palm  
against my pleas.  
The dusk bargaining with the city  
for the blue-gray in your eyes.

*by Chandra DasGupta*

*Best Art, 1998*



*Caroline Danforth*

*Calypso*

*Pastel*

## Driving Since 7:00 a.m.

Driving since 7:00 a.m. on US 52  
(it's noon, hot already on the two lane highway,  
the vinyl upholstery's been sweating for hours),  
along a scenic route from W. Portsmouth to Cincinnati & further  
past oatmeal-graveled roads & black-coffee mornings of lives  
stitched into quilted patches of farmland, houses

so close to the road I am driving, houses  
that inch closer together when the wind scrapes US 52.  
I skim the edges of alternating lives  
without fences & half-hearted barns, leaning on highway  
hinges connecting where I've been to where I'm going & further.  
Time passes more slowly in the sun, counting hours

in shadows—I've driven 2 more hours  
to a town I could tattoo around my ankle: houses  
in inked slashes, steel beam bridges in ladder stitches—further  
past faded signs in convenience-store windows on US 52:  
God is Good. BuySellTrade. Let Yourself Be Saved: highway  
religion preaches 5-second sermons to pastoral lives.

I could fold my body into these wheat-nestled lives,  
bury myself in amaretto fields, & sleep for hours  
in grass stretched deep as graves along this highway  
that winds through places sprawling & quiet, houses  
accordion fashion & clapboard, pleats of yard between. US 52  
takes us closer to oil-stained bohemia, further

through flowers wild & time-stalled. Further down wheat has feathered into stalks, & the ground lives & breathes still, where rain has seeped into clay beneath US 52. A shuddering landscape breaks sky & river in streaks of hours layered in clouds, against sunlight creasing into houses. Burning maple syrup smolders through leaves falling on the highway,

leavening in fossiled outlines, skeletons on asphalt highway. I reach into the wind, prick fingers on grassy-needled heat. Further into afternoon we drive, into moments ticking inside houses, framed artifacts of cornmeal & dried marigold. These are lives that feel softer from the outside. I stretch hours with my fingers, leaning outside to touch what is solid, on US 52.

I have driven for hours, into a photograph of lives ribboned into thatched-roof houses, steeped along a highway weaving further, past Cincinnati, leaving polaroid traces along US 52.

*by Alison Titus*

## This in a Hot Spell

Trade ya my change for your crisp cigarette  
mark my words I'm bound to quit  
watch the children run pounce dive  
wet hair whips wild  
Later now dogs howl  
what makes 'em so sad and lonely  
this dead-end street is a treasure  
it seems  
but I'm not gonna be confined  
let the distances seep in and  
further us from here  
from each other  
damn doesn't have to be that way  
get rich in choice  
stretch yer voice  
yell holler scream so they can  
hear ya down the street  
'cross town  
throughout this cosmos  
Impossible ya say  
well lay yer fat head down  
and dream yerself  
brightly  
Tell me what happens  
by and by

*by Sarah McCall*

## *Dickinson's Cigarettes*

Giving her a couple,  
lighting them with her matches  
sitting in her attic  
her legs propped up on the windowsill.  
She said death was Amherst,  
death was the attic's stifling air.  
We would nod, in silence.  
She would speak of her gravestone,  
of the flowers in the garden.  
Sometimes I would ask her if she  
believed in premonitions,  
of true chaos, or if she believed  
in the ghosts of the courtyard.  
Then we would light another.

*by Chandra DasGupta*



*Caroline Danforth*

*Germany*

*Pastel*

# *Maps*

Turning pages,  
seated within a rusty-red cushion  
surrounded by the noises of percolating coffee,  
and the tac-tac of knitting needles,  
examining pages and pages of maps and maps,  
bound and titled: Ethel Swartley 1906.

Ethel in a photograph, 10-years-old,  
standing awkwardly, self-consciously.  
Her border-collie alert,  
nose sniffing something—  
maybe Ethel's father, whistling up the walk,  
forever outside the photographer's lens.

Ethel, author of the pages, artist of  
the maps that consume my attention,  
seated in the rusty-red cushion.

An amateur cartographer  
of America at 1906  
of America to a ten-year-old—  
borders elongated and compacted  
unsure of an exact state size  
wary of boundaries  
shaded at the corners  
faded around the edges.

Ethel in 1906  
the background filled  
by the symmetry and framework of the farmhouse,  
the beams, the foundation of her home,  
symmetrical and fitting.  
Ethel-focused and clear,  
crisp dress, glossy skin.  
The yard fades out  
blurs out to the right  
no picture, no focus—  
the edges smudge out, or at least, are uncharted by Ethel.

*by Lindsay Stover*



Lindsey Flaherty

*Grand Prize*

*Black and White photography*

## Rarest of Blankets

Think of the last time  
you felt pressure.

Pressure so intense  
upon the tympanic membrane,  
like an ephemeral, cranial exchange  
with a bottom-dweller.

So intense  
upon the permeable duodenum walls  
as if the last three mugs of coffee  
were lethal injection.

So intense  
that the morning cleanser  
lathered a fine, follicular film  
of cold, nauseating sweat.

And then think of the payoffs  
that these kinds of mental  
and ensuing physical  
pressures  
lead you to.

I have to ask  
is it all worth it  
and what do you have  
to show for it.

And if you say, "Well—  
I'm a B student..."  
I'd have to say,  
(Congratulations—you are  
distinctly above average)  
"So what?"

For my blue collar brother operates  
a twenty-five foot-long back loader  
while his grin challenges the width  
of the machine's grill.

Finding comfort  
in his own adeptness,  
he offers me a shoulder,  
powered by a resting heart rate  
ten beats below mine.

He then absorbs my condensing brow  
into his worn, patched flannel,  
and sighs contentment,  
the rarest of blankets in these parts;  
and just that easily  
he can give me permission  
that I cannot even give myself  
to sleep.  
And I do.

*by Dow Stick*



Zach Holtzman

*Self Portrait V*

*Ink & Monoprint*

(another)  
picked out because of his smile  
(accessibility)  
dancing a crooked life  
while watching  
(another)  
the blond hair  
cropped and fucking  
and he thinks of her always  
I watch this one's moves  
(naked)  
the twirl of wind  
and sheets clammering  
with another

*by Chandra DasGupta*



*Alison Brown*

*One Kiss*

*Black and White photography*

## *over geological discussions*

discussing textures of rocks and minerals i'm zoning  
from watching the prof to watching  
her

her sits behind me

up two rows over the left shoulder  
third or fourth seat in

her listens to the prof as i should be  
head on a bent jeansed knee  
pony-tailed back with strands loose,  
her hair falls down her back  
a button nose

(you know the ones only porcelain dolls have)  
and dark sienna eyes

i'm falling in love with looking at her

kissing her mouth and running her pony tail through my fingers  
i'm falling in love with the idea

i watch her intensely

watching the prof

my feelings overcoming me, mind, myself....all  
but i can still love her  
over geological discussions

*by Natasha Ward*

## **heat seek**

The airport is impossible to find,  
even though it's larger than some small towns and countries  
It's always the last town  
You see someone  
for a week  
a year  
ever  
there are many angry people  
who know exactly where  
they want to be  
while you're still  
sitting there deciding,  
they have horns  
(and they aren't afraid to use them)

I know we're late,  
but your flight probably is too  
so should we hug or kiss or what?

*by Andrew Mefferd*



## alchemy.

Draped in melted eggshells in the shape  
of his oldest button-down shirt, she  
crouches in the kitchen between stacks  
of cookbooks & newspapers, on the morning  
of a lunar eclipse, considering her options.  
She pinches a Rubik's cube from yesterday's  
paper, working her fingers like scissors,  
tearing out pieces of prophecy in rectangles.  
She licks the back of her horoscope,  
tasting newsprint acrid like sulphur and  
pastes it to the wall, covering a few more  
inches of plaster.

Making wallpaper out of lead-colored  
smudges, she stains the milky half-moons  
that edge her thumbnails, turning  
what might have been ivory to ink.  
Forgetting to wash her hands, she lies  
down on the floor, checking her collage  
of forecasts for corners that might peel.  
Not quite finished,  
*because there must be more than this,*  
stretching palms flat to linoleum,

she reads the slick-waxed ridges  
with the tips of her fingers as if  
her kitchen floor is a oujia board,  
tracing the patterned columns of  
upside-down half-leaves across the  
room, leaving silver Rorschached  
figures in ashes and making up stories.  
Confusing impulses with magic.

*by Alison Titus*

## Holiday Dinner *at Diner*

Cigarettes and coffee make your breath stink  
and your words mean less  
I stare absently out of the  
window at your sentences passing  
out of my head and onto  
the street as cars run over them in  
pre-traffic haste  
putting them out of their misery.  
My eyes move towards you  
as my nose again receives the traces of your mouth.  
I stare into your eyes and see  
nothing in them or in those of  
the waiter when he asks if I want  
more coffee.  
As I deny and you indulge,  
you say to me again:  
"Did you get all of that?"  
I nod my head and give you a kiss  
saying:  
"Yes mother, I did. I really must go now  
and beat the traffic."  
I leave you, the coffee  
and the bill.  
I take to the streets  
quickly in hopes that  
I myself may catch up with some of  
those words and run them over before  
another has the chance.

*by Benjamin Bishop*

*Best Literature, 1998*

**[in other words, samsara]**

not exactly trespassing,  
we sweep forward in brown  
grass, tiptoeing into july's burning  
nights unweaving themselves: our clothes unclinging  
  
and taper to the ground,  
not mattering. drawn to the pulsing  
river, we slip into our second skin too easily  
not to fit here, in the overturned sky that lies sweating  
  
onto the earth.  
falling open, the river  
tongues us. we squeeze into the water  
cells, breathing as if we are used to this,  
  
and weightless  
enough to float before the first  
birth, again: in these moments unclaimed  
our bodies break in the transparency of night against  
  
skin, crossectioned  
by complicated puzzles of water  
and lighter spaces between tree-branched  
shadows. down deeper is as warm as inside a vein  
  
must be, and we pause  
between movement and hesitation,  
breath held for one more priestly sacrifice.  
listening, as if we could know what comes next.

*by Alison Titus*



S.Z. Tucker

Vase #3

*Smoke Fired Clay*

# Classic Navy Heels

after days of shopping, mornings at church,  
lunch over bridge games, and weekly cocktail parties,  
the shoes are as tired and weary  
as the feet that used to fill them,  
but now they can rest under the seat.  
retired, a myriad of  
feathery wrinkles and soft creases

dates the worn midnight blue leather  
like the wrinkles on her face:  
the fine lines around her mouth,  
that made her smile more  
than a smile with each new crease  
in the softest skin  
that grinned for at least a lifetime.

the squared-off toe-box is still bent upward  
as if she just took them off—a perfect  
preservation of her sprightly steps  
to the mailbox and back each morning.  
the navy finish has long since rubbed off the backs of both heels  
exposing hardened stacked leather  
but that happens over time and

it's okay that the gold clasps are rusted  
because they're holding on to each other,  
clinging together shining faintly.  
her one inch heels as wide as tall—  
the foundation and stepping stone  
of a woman, of a family—  
a plaster cast of a life calloused by loss.

that's why her tongue juts out in determination  
where her bone thrust like a knuckle  
out of her foot  
from wearing cheap cramped clearance rack shoes  
purchased in another lifetime  
before he bought this pair for her  
and made her ours.

*by Lauren Q. Chadwick*

# **Comet**

No stretch marks.

No baby feet.

No womb capable.

I've spent so long dreaming of something else  
than the vastness of the sky on which I endlessly gaze.

But now, with telescope and sky charts,

I have discovered you:

streaming, fleeting, newcomer

striking and streaking among cousins of stars.

As I turned to the Mother Universe herself,

you were born, delivered against an enveloping black sky.

I name you, bring you into the minds of others as my own,  
my own flaming existence.

*by Lindsay Stover*



*Christina Charba*

*Baby Ashley*

*Charcoal*

# Filler

By Samuel S. Rio

Gabe just fell back asleep. In a half an hour's time it will be too hot to sleep any longer. He had this in mind when he drew the cords toward him in bed, doubling the Venetian blinds into themselves, allowing the sun to lay with him, Catherine, and their daughter. 'Cat' or 'Little Catherine' oscillates her conscious body in the space between her parents. She is not prone to tears; Catherine and Gabe have grown into the explanation that, "Cat gets soooo much love, she doesn't need to cry." 'Cat' turned thirteen months old a Thursday ago.

He pleaded that the ultra-sounded girl-to-be be named after her. Catherine protested the idea to disguise her sudden inclination to be a name-sake. She believes everything is the result of, at least, an ever so slight conflict. "What do you call a child, a girl, that's named after her mother? -We can't call her 'junior': little *boys* are called 'junior'." At these times Gabe would touch them with his two hands on Catherine's abdomen, and say, "Let's call her 'Catherine', maybe 'Cat'...I'll call out, 'Catherine, could you come help me.' And the both of you'll look at each other, shrug, then laugh without me hearing, and say the other one is coming."

By noon, Gabe will be laughing at himself laughing two and a half years ago. The memory of that day will be clear, and he will be impressed by the ease with which these events are exhumed from what has past. By herself, Catherine will be unable to remember. He will recite his memory, and Catherine's face will tighten, opeining her mouth and eventually freeing a silent mewl.

They were meeting their friends, Jimmy Watsom and Abby Gamb, for a late lunch/early dinner in Georgetown. Jimmy and Abby hadn't left the area after completing their undergraduate studies, but had voluntarily resituated themselves more than once. They were going to renew their lease in another month. The thrifty idea to eat at this time was discovered by Catherine and Abby in college. The money saved, eating before dinner menus are put on tables, was to ease the high priced burden of drinking at clubs in a city. This manuever is the near genius of budgeted persons, couples, and groups; still, two drawbacks are incurred. First, a prematurely sloppy evening is risked when the tendency to have alcoholic

beverages with a meal is exercised. Also, a certain amount of down-time between the end of dinner and stepping out to the bars must be negotiated.

The couples shared four Indian dishes, and two carafes of red wine. Discussion was ample, good spirited, and without consequence; they had been anxious to catch up.

When they returned to Abby and Jimmy's apartment, to negotiate down-time, the television was on. Abby would leave it on for Puella, her cat; however, Puella wasn't watching the five o'clock news that approached its six o'clock end. Abby, Catherine and Jimmy walked past the tv. Jimmy went to the bathroom, and Abby led Catherine through the apartment, half-searching for Puella, on the leash of a conversation. They were reunited in the living room to hear a manufacturer's recall broadcast. A baby-rocker was being taken off the market after seven toddlers were reported strangled to death, constricted by the machine's straps.

Moving across the living room to shut an open window, Abby voiced a mark of grievance for the families. Gabe projected a laugh that began in his viscus and created its own momentum in becoming orated. He tried explaining, but laughter hindered the effectiveness of this attempt. Between chuckles he managed, "It's not funny -it is. Sorry. But when you think about it: your child, your baby--you put your 'precious' down, crank up the rocker, go get the mail, look over the advertisement on the back of the missing persons brochure, come back, and your baby...strangled. I mean: how-what the hell would you do if that was you--I'll tell ya, I'd uh, just fuckin' laugh. Not 'ha-ha' laugh, okay(?), but like...you know, just laugh cause ya -ya have to do something."

No one was listening to Gabe. Catherine was talking about how embarrassed she was to have married someone that would laugh aloud at this news. Jimmy expressed his lack of comprehension regarding Gabe in general. And Abby just looked at Puella laying dead two stories below the window she hadn't managed to close.

With this, the evening unwound in the lull of an intermission. Jimmy and Gabe went outside to take care of Puella, but couldn't decide what to do with it, "Does she want to bury it, you think?" They each had a cigarette there, standing over the cat, and Jimmy explained how Puella would have been better off dropping ten stories, "...they have time to relax all their muscles at that height: from two stories

they're all stiff, that's no good - it's like the drunk driver surviving a crash, and the sober family not." Catherine came down and mentioned, "you shouldn't free base dead cat fumes. . . . We can hear you two from up there, you know." Abby wasn't going out that evening. Gabe and Catherine left within the half hour.

Noon is hours away. Gabe sleeps in the partial shade of thin clouds. Catherine is awake, moments from tearing Gabe to consciousness. 'Cat' is still, without breath or life, knotted in the cords of Venetian blinds. ■



Lindsey Flaherty

Untitled

Ink

# Kevin Hugh Didn't Know What To Do

Sam Bam  
whiskey sour  
Cunningham  
leans on the bar  
with a hard elbow  
and a safe scotch.

Sam Bam  
won't let the gin run dry  
Cunningham  
once a chicken leg boy  
fisted with hammer-hands  
Racing in bare  
summer feet.

Ham  
Jack Daniels  
Sam  
can't remember days  
his chicken bones  
sprinted turn-overs  
like old records racing  
in cluck-cluck chicken  
rhythms pacing  
over sun-stained stones  
and uneven pavement.

Ham Bam  
At the bar ten years later  
Cunningham  
wallows in fresh  
squeezed whiskey  
crisp and healthy  
for forgetting.

Sam Bam  
gin pumping  
Cunningham  
smothers faded memories  
with Daddy's grey-white hair  
Sam wrinkles a mean  
daddy-thin frown.

"Chicken legs, chicken legs!"  
I call to Sam.  
Don't want to lose  
Bam in Daddy's  
dark thunder hard clouds.

"Sam Bam," I cry  
repeat after me:  
Green eggs, I remember  
rosy cheeks, chicken legs,  
and ham, Sam I am."

With whiskey-flamed cheeks  
poor Cunningham speaks  
"Damn Sam Dumb Lamb  
Daddy Cunningham."

Sam drips like rain  
Cunningham  
in puddles muddied  
with family portraits.

Old Chicken Legs carries  
scotch like a hammer  
pounding away nicknames  
and days.

*by Katy Sullivan*



Kirsten St.Clair

Aargh!

Pencil drawing

## **Ducks.**

neatly mippiling the surface  
of a living green contact lens—  
skimming cleanly as the skin  
off milk, and i  
like the watersounds.  
(or lack)— a  
pleeple pleeple of dropping wet beads from  
leaky brown overhangs as the eye's  
light critically  
beams through me. and i like  
the ducksounds too— when suddenly  
wings emerge and slap  
at the water in stinging phaughts, and  
the yelp cracking the air while the  
water cries (tippletipple)  
and then pleeples again and quiet.  
and i like the singsounds of wheeps and whirps as  
they move on the wet escalator and  
poke their beaks into rufflefeather  
backs— how they  
lullay me damply, how  
existence is croon.

*by Meg Weireter*

# *ceruleans & midnights*

driving 64 West

i remember our conversation or questions  
i didn't answer last night,  
or this morning.

the mountains slope into the sky,  
a sunset rising in layers of blues, thinning  
before thickening, & deepening  
to violet where they overlap.

the sky, steel pressed into a bruise,  
webs out & across in ligaments  
that collect & darken the afternoon  
into the minutes before  
a thunder storm, when the air  
is heaviest & smells the most  
of suffocation.

the rain begins, falling away  
in sheets, surges not quite waves  
that peel temples from the sky &  
leave the ground sacred  
& damp & moving.

for each hour that collapses  
behind me into another on  
the interstate, there's more  
i haven't told you.

8 hours until Chicago, i turn the stations  
until i find Neil Young, halfway  
between needing to remember,  
driving west and closer to forgetting,  
while ghosts heave silently  
in ceruleans & midnights,  
somewhere in the mountains,  
almost in Ohio.

*by Alison Titus*



Lindsey Flaherty

*Untitled*

*Ink*

hearts speak strangely  
tongues look like waving hands  
I got poisonous dreams  
and envious fingertips  
drumming drumming on the chair's  
arm  
damn clouds  
lovely gray day stay!  
I love you  
(terrible thrice, worse than too nice)  
for sake of stale smoke  
sick stomachs  
ate too much  
dreamt wildly:  
    the beach the beach was  
    tiny and packed with people  
    from everywhere that I  
    know/knew  
    you whispered close to my ear  
    "I'm back"  
    then the crowd gobbled you up  
    again  
inside I craved lovin' and respite  
from the bland summer  
my big dictionary fell in the  
water  
came up dry  
no one payed any mind  
there was corruption  
everywhere! hear?  
critters dying unnaturally  
smoke rising oppositely  
from tight bunches  
loud music sounds  
    (or was that peripheral  
        dreaming atop dreaming)

*by Sarah McCall*



# AUBADE 1998

The Mary Washington College Review of Arts and Literature

*Editor-In-Chief*  
Sarah McCall

*Art Editor*  
Rebecca Barker

*Staff*  
Colleen Blue  
Chandra DasGupta  
Lindsey Flaherty  
Cara Kenney

Cover Art: *Untitled* by Karen Pearlman  
Title Page Art: *A Change* by Allison Brown

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